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Making School FAIR, One Class at a Time

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Benji Delgadillo is a junior at San Juan Hills High School, and he is a trainer on the Southern California Youth Council, a member of the Statewide Advocacy Council and serves as Secretary on the Board of Directors for GSA Network. His story, below, was referenced in [The New York Times article](#)^[1] on the FAIR Education Act.



After attending [GAYLA/QYAD](#)^[2] and getting a chance to testify in the Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing in support of the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful (FAIR) Education Act, I returned to my school with nothing but FAIR education on my mind. Where were LGBT people like me in my classroom discussions?

In my history class that week, we were covering the 1960s and the civil rights movements. My textbook did, in fact, include a section about the Stonewall Riots, but former students told me that my teacher never mentioned anything about it in his lesson. It was important enough for my textbook, it was important enough for the California Senate, and it was important enough for me, so I decided to discuss it with my teacher.

I told my teacher about the FAIR Education Act and how I had testified for it just a few days prior. I explained to him that the bill would make sure LGBT people were fairly and accurately included in classroom instruction, and I told him my personal story, outing myself to him as a member of the queer community. By not hearing about LGBT history, a whole group of people that I identify with was being discounted. Finally, I explained that if he took the initiative to teach about LGBT

history in the classroom, it would show students another side of LGBT people, contrary to the negative stereotypes often portrayed in the media and other places. This would in turn change the school climate to be a more safe and inclusive space for all students and reduce bullying.

My teacher had never thought about it in that way, but now agreed with me that LGBT people and history should be included in instructional materials in school ? and in his classroom. He added information about the Stonewall Riots and the start of the Gay Liberation movement to his PowerPoint presentation and made sure to cover their causes and effects thoroughly. I had never smiled so much during a lesson in school. It made me so happy that I had the support of my teacher.

In the days since then, my teacher has been following the FAIR Education Act's journey, and has asked me to help him create new instructional materials in relation to LGBT people and events in history that he can use in the years to come. Although the FAIR Education Act hasn't passed yet, with the help of GSA Network and my history teacher, I was able to take my first step in my GSA's new [Sharing Our Stories: LGBT Curriculum](#) [3] campaign.

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Links

[1] http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/16/us/16schools.html?_r=1&hp

[2] <https://gsanetwork.org/events/queer-youth-advocacy-day>

[3] <https://gsanetwork.org/get-involved/change-your-school/campaigns/lgbtq-inclusive-curriculum>